

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Trout Committee

Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	22 Aug 2015	0930-1455	Marathon Public Library, 300 1st Street, Wausau, WI
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	Chairman Vanden Bloomen at 0935
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Dennis Vanden Bloomen, Chair (Eau Claire), Jim Wierzba. Vice Chair, (Ozaukee), Dale Ebert (Florence), Tom Daluga (Waukesha), Bob Haase (Fond du Lac), Dave Ninneman (Outagamie), Maurice Amundson (Monroe), Roger Roehl (Rusk), Robert Reidner (Rusk), Nathanael Brown (Taylor), George Korn (Menominee), Scott Pitta (Adams), Edgar Anderson (Trempealeau), Shaun Deeney (WI DNR Warden), Shawn Sullivan (WI DNR Fisheries), Gene Van Dyck (WI DNR Fish Management)
EXCUSED	Dennis Haanpaa (Iron), Martin Sands (Walworth), Erick Flood (Douglas), David Baron (Richland)
UNEXCUSED	Unexcused - Erick Flood Jr. (Douglas) and Larry Knutson (Crawford)
GUESTS	Harry Turner (LaCrosse), Lee Fahrney, WCC Executive Committee (Iowa), Linda Lehman (Marathon)

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	No additions or deletions to agenda
ACTION	Approved

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	No changes brought forward
ACTION	Approved

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	none
ACTION	

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. ALTERNATE BAG LIMITS-RESOLUTIONS (020315, 040615, 131215, 240215, 260215, 370615, 450215, 460215, 480115, 490315, 520615, 560315, 700215)

LINDA LEHMAN

DISCUSSION	<p>Resolution—that NR 20.35 is amended to include--by name—the three trout species of our state (brook, brown, rainbow) and an alternate temporary size limit and bag limit for each that would apply under certain circumstances alongside the warm water species already protected via listing in the administrative code.</p> <p>A. Presentations by Linda Lehman and JIM WIERZBA (TWO of the Resolution Authors)</p> <p>Discussion - includes a lot of bass and walleye details that we probably don't have to include given trout topic - maybe shorten? There was also discussion on whether the three trout species (Brook, Brown and</p>
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	<p>Rainbow) will be sufficient or do hybrids (e.g. Tiger trout) need to be added (or hybrid language?) General agreement that when the original language was drafted there was an oversight to not have included the trout species and that this resolution was a common sense change to make especially given the proposed changes to the trout regulations targeted for 2016.</p> <p><u>Response</u> from the WI DNR Trout Management Team presented by G. Van Dyck: Biologists have the authority under s. NR 20.35, Wis. Adm. Code, to apply alternate size limits, bag limits, or both in order to provide for better use and management of the fishery resource in a particular waterbody. The alternate limits are intended to be temporary, corrective measures applied to species currently managed under general statewide size and bag limits. This authority is currently used for walleye, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike and panfish. In order for a water to be exempted from existing size limits and apply “no minimum size limit,” walleye, largemouth bass, or smallmouth bass populations in a waterbody must meet criteria proving slow growth or high contamination levels.</p> <p>In order for an alternate size or daily bag limit to be applied to walleye, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, or panfish, at least one of the following criteria must exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lake restoration project is being put in place to reduce detrimental fish species that includes bio-manipulation of a waterbody through increasing the abundance and biomass of predator game fish. • A rehabilitation program involving fish removal is in place to reestablish a good supply of game fish. • Alternate limits would be applied to control the population of documented detrimental, nonindigenous, or rough fish species in order to protect the native fish populations. <p>The alternate minimum size and daily bag limits are designated in NR 20.35 and apply to particular species: 18 inch or 3 walleye, 18 inch or 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass, 32 inch or 1 northern pike, or 10 panfish.</p> <p>The biologist needs to document one or more criteria and submit a public notice. A public information meeting may be requested. If the alternate regulation moves forward, the biologist posts the regulation by the effective date and estimates the length of time the alternate limit will remain in place.</p> <p>If these resolutions move forward to the spring hearings in 2016, the Department would need to decide to pursue this rule change. Then the Trout Management Team would need to develop criteria and bag and size limits appropriate for alternate trout regulations in streams and lakes.</p> <p>Committee Discussion: This change would be based on species and not based on water type. It would correct an omission in the WI Administrative Code.</p>	
ACTION	MB R. HASSE, SB R. ROEHL to Accept and forward the Resolution. Motion Passed	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
Chair Vanden Bloomen		1 September 2015

B. RETURN CASTLE ROCK TROUT STREAM TO 2002 STATUS RESOLUTION--(250415)

HARRY TURNER

DISCUSSION	<p>Resolution—beginning with the 2016 trout fishing season, the DNR return the Castle Rock trout stream to its 2002 status and its 2002 regulations. This will restore the one (1) mile of the stream, extending from the Castle Rock town bridge to the County Q bridge west of the town to “live bait-catch and keep” status.</p> <p>Presentation by Harry Turner (Resolution Author) Currently there are 3 miles of catch-and-release as opposed to 1 mile of harvest. Would like to return to 2002 length which would be 2 miles of catch-and-release and 2 miles of harvest. He also presented some personal observation of low numbers of people fishing in the catch-and-release area for 3 weeks in May and a weekend in August.</p> <p><u>Response</u> from the WI DNR Trout Management Team presented by G. Van Dyck:</p> <p>Castle Rock creek has long been one of the most popular and heavily fished trout streams in the area. The catch and release stretch (from Church Road Bridge downstream to the 1st CTH Q Bridge) was first established in 1977. In 1979 the catch and release area was extended downstream to the 2nd CTH Q Bridge. When the new trout regulation package went into effect in 1990, the catch and release area (along with other catch and release areas around the state), were reduced. In 2003, the catch and</p>
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	<p>release area was again extended to the 2nd CTH Q Bridge. The fishery has remained in good condition and the fishing pressure has remained high (often times, anglers have to wait until another angler leaves in order to fish the stretch). This proposal would remove about half of the catch and release stream section and return it to catch and keep. This change is not recommended due to the high fishing pressure in that area.</p> <p>There was a difference of opinion between Van Dyck and Turner on the impact of changing the section. Turner suggested 1 mile and that it was 1/3 of the Catch & Release area but Van Dyck said the change would remove nearly half of the Catch & Release area. The Catch & Release area serves as a refuge for the trout subject to heavy fishing pressure and that decreasing this area would have a detrimental impact given fish move in and out of the Catch & Release area and will detrimentally impact trout populations given the low natural reproduction rates there.</p> <p>Committee Discussion: This stream is stocked because there is a lack of natural trout reproduction. There is heavy fishing in the 1 mile of harvest stream section during the May opening weekend with light fishing in that section until September weekends.</p>	
ACTION	MB J. Wierzba SB R. Haase to reject the resolution and not forward. Motion Passed	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	
Chair Vanden Bloomen	1 September 2015	

C. GET THE LEAD OUT RESOLUTION--(131915)

ASSIGNED TO WCC ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

VANDEN BLOOMEN AND REIDNER

DISCUSSION	<p>Resolution—WCC to work with the DNR to help end the intense suffering and unnecessary deaths of millions of birds and wildlife by banning products that contain toxic lead in ammunition and fishing gear in WI, under the Toxic Substances Control Act.</p> <p>Discussion: What is the impact of lead used in trout fishing on the environment? A study by the University of Minnesota did study the use of lead ammunition and deer hunting. Hunting ammunition is slowly changing over to non-lead products. This was done at the manufacturing level.</p> <p>Many flies are already tied with non-toxic materials. Lead can also be present as wrapped weight on trout flies and in sinker use. Also concerns about warden enforcement of a lead ban on flies - are they going to take apart a fly to determine if lead wire present?</p> <p>Is lead used in trout fishing concentrated enough to be picked up by birds such as the case with migratory birds and lead shot in waterfowl hunting? The waterfowl industry adapted and now steel shot is used.</p> <p>Spinner baits used in trout fishing may have lead.</p> <p>If lead is banned for trout fishing how many years would it take to use up the current supply owned by fishermen? Would there be an incentive to trade in lead products.</p> <p>How have other states done the change-over to non-toxic materials?</p> <p>To get ahead of any rule changes sportsmen should voluntarily use non-lead substitutes. Education can play a role in this change.</p> <p>General opinion was that Trout fishing should not lead this effort as our amount of lead is minimal compared to other areas like migratory and deer.</p>	
ACTION	MB Edgar Anderson, SB Roger Roehl to reject motion--passed	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	
Chair Vanden Bloomen	1 September 2015	

D. RULE SIMPLIFICATION COMMITTEE SUGGESTION— ELIMINATE “ARTIFICIALS ONLY” RESTRICTION FROM TROUT REGULATIONS

DISCUSSION	Recommendation from WCC Rule Simplification Committee: Review the “artificials only” restriction
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Response from the Wisconsin DNR Trout Management Team presented by G. Van Dyck:

We do not have any data to show that there would be a significant biological problem allowing bait in catch-and-release waters. Bait hooking mortality may be slightly higher than artificial hooking mortality, but this proposal is much more of a social issue than a biological issue. The angler mail survey showed that 26% of trout anglers always use artificial bait and 33% often use artificial bait. This is about the same proportion as the anglers who always use (23%) and often use (32%) live bait. About 42% of the anglers oppose regulations that allow live bait on catch-and-release streams and 49% oppose only artificial allowed. As stated in the proposal, bait fishing is a critical step in angler development. Under the proposed trout regulations the majority (90%) of trout stream miles will not have any bait restrictions and 6% of the stream miles will have high quality size structure regulations without bait restrictions.

Regulation Type	% Trout stream miles
No size limit (5 or more bag)	49%
Yellow (8" min, 3 bag)	35%
Artificial only	2.25%
High quality size structure (no bait restrictions)	6%

Advances in bait fishing technology might work well to reduce deep hooking, but requiring that would add another level of complication and compliance. Bait fishing anglers may not prefer to fish in catch-and-release waters. The angler survey shows that regardless of the type of bait, anglers want harvest opportunity. However, anglers that often or always use live bait were significantly more likely to support a regulation allowing the harvest of trout on the streams they fish. There was no correlation found between anglers who used artificial only and the regulations that allow harvest. This is most likely because a higher percentage of bait anglers prefer to harvest fish than those fishing with artificial bait. See

[Trout Fishing in Wisconsin: angler behavior, program assessment and regulation and season preference \[PDF\]](#) for more details.

Committee Discussion: if no harvest (catch and release) allowed then you do not want live bait use when you are trying to increase the fish population. There is always some hooking mortality. Need "artificials only" as part of the tool box to manage trout populations. Some live bait techniques have lower mortality such as circle hooks and ½ crawler. Would require more education and some study to get data on mortality rates if people are using "gulp" type products for trout fishing.

Wisconsin has become a trout destination and the artificials only sections of streams drive significant economic and tourism dollars

S. Deeney (Warden) A hook restriction, such as circle hook use only with live bait would be difficult to enforce. The current definition of "live bait" would classify products such as "gulp" as artificial. Only 6 tickets were issued for violations for use of live bait in artificial only areas in the past five (5) years.

ACTION	"Sense" of the committee is the "artificials only" option should remain as a trout management tool.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	
Chair Vanden Bloomen to forward this discussion to the Rule Simplification Committee and WCC Executive Committee	1 September 2015	

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	WCC Housekeeping Issues presented by Lee Fahrney (WCC Executive Committee).	
	Issue: Set the date for the 2016 Trout Committee meeting. Allow the majority of the members to plan schedules accordingly. Possible Saturday dates (13, 20, 27 August). Keep location in Stevens Point/Wausau area.	
	Issue: the 10-year Trout Regulations Review will take effect in the 2016 season. How can the WCC	

	<p>Trout Committee speak to the issue of changing/modifying those regulations on a particular stream.</p> <p>(1) Speak with the fish manager for that stream—why is this regulation applied to that stream? What is the management GOAL?</p> <p>(2) Some study would justify the current regulation. It may already exist.</p> <p>(3) Implement the County Resolution process in the Spring Hearings. That could take 2-3 years.</p> <p>(4) Need evaluation beforehand not just one person's opinion/observation.</p> <p>Issue: Current trout season review by members. Good water levels depend on the part of the state you are fishing. DNR surveys show good trout populations but there are fishability issues in southern WI.</p> <p>Issue: estimate of global warming impact on brook trout vs brown trout populations. Brown trout can tolerate a bit warmer water than brook trout.</p> <p>DNR Trout Committee needs to clarify/revisit the definition of artificial baits for the statute and regulations booklets (enforcement and angler education purposes) in light of numerous new baits available.</p>
ACTION	Poll the committee members for best date for 2016 meeting by Chair.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	1455
SUBMITTED BY	D. Vanden Bloomen, Chair
DATE	27 August 2015